

**Article 7: Elections, Campaign Finance and Lobbying**  
(Retitled to “Elections, Campaign Finance and Lobbying”  
on 5-18-1998 by O-18511 N.S.)

**Division 1: Elections - General**  
(Renumbered from Division 20 on 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0101 Purpose and Intent**

The purpose and intent of Chapter 2, article 7, is to provide an expeditious and complete procedure for the people’s right to exercise the vote. If there is any ambiguity or contradiction between the provisions of general law and the provisions of this article, the provisions of this article shall govern. The divisions relating to initiative, referendum and recall (including the initiative provisions relating to Charter amendments) are exclusive as required by the Charter.  
(“Purpose and Intent” renumbered from Sec. 27.2001 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0102 Substantial Compliance Sufficient**

Substantial compliance with the provisions of this article shall be deemed sufficient to hold a valid *election*.  
(“Substantial Compliance Sufficient” renumbered from Sec. 27.2002 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0103 Definitions**

Terms specific to this article are defined in this section. Defined terms are noted by italics.

“*Ballot Materials*” means those items printed on the ballot or in the *voter pamphlet* relating to *measures* or *candidates*.

- (a) For *ballot measures*, *ballot materials* include the ordinance placing the *measure* on the ballot, which contains the *ballot question*. They also include the impartial analysis, if any; the fiscal impact analysis, if any; and arguments for and against the *measure*, if any.
- (b) For *candidate elections*, *ballot materials*, include the ordinance placing the names of the *candidates* on the ballot, the ballot designation of the *candidate*, and the statement of *candidate’s* qualifications.

"*Ballot Question*" means the condensed statement of a *measure* being submitted to the *voters*, as that statement appears on the ballot. The *ballot question* may or may not be phrased as a question.

"*Board of Supervisors*" means the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego.

"*Candidate*" means any individual who

- (a) is listed on the ballot for *elective City office*; or
- (b) has begun to circulate nominating *petitions* or authorized others to do so on his or her behalf for nomination for or election to a City office; or
- (c) has received a contribution or made an expenditure or authorized another person to receive a contribution or make an expenditure with the intent to bring about his or her nomination for or *election* to any City office; or
- (d) is a City office holder who becomes the subject of a recall *election*. A City office holder "becomes the subject of a recall *election*" on the date a notice of intention to circulate a recall *petition* is published pursuant to the recall provisions of this article.

"*City-wide General Election*" means either of the following:

- (a) the *election* at which the Mayor and City Attorney are elected unless such officers are elected at the *City-wide Primary Election*; or
- (b) a City-wide municipal *election* consolidated with the statewide *election* on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year.

"*City-wide Primary Election*" means the *election* at which the Mayor and City Attorney are nominated.

"*Circulator*" is an individual who gathers signatures on a nominating, initiative, referendary or recall *petition*. It includes an individual who gathers signatures on a Charter amendment *petition*.

"*Clerk*" means the City Clerk of the City of San Diego.

"*Council*" means the City Council of the City of San Diego.

"*District General Election*" means an *election* at which *Council candidates* are elected unless such officers are elected at the *District Primary Election*.

"*District Primary Election*" means an *election* at which *Council candidates* are nominated.

"*Election*" means a *District* or *City-wide Primary Election*, a *District* or *City-wide General Election*, or a *special* municipal *election* held in the City of San Diego. It may also mean an *election* of the San Diego Unified School District.

"*Elective Office*" means the office of the Mayor, Councilmember, or City Attorney of the City of San Diego. It may include the office of a member of the governing board of the San Diego Unified School District.

"*Enforcement Authority*" means the City of San Diego Ethics Commission. Nothing in this article limits the authority of the City Attorney, any law enforcement agency, or any prosecuting attorney to enforce the provisions of this Article under any circumstances where the City Attorney, law enforcement agency, or prosecuting attorney otherwise has lawful authority to do so.

"*Measure*" means any City Charter amendment or proposition which is:

- (a) submitted to a popular vote at a City *election* by action of the City *Council*; or
- (b) submitted or intended to be submitted to a popular vote at a City *election* by the procedure of initiative or referendum whether or not it qualifies for the ballot. A *measure* and a proposition are synonymous.

"*Person*" has the same meaning as that term is defined in San Diego Municipal Code section 11.0210.

"*Petition*" means one or more documents seeking action by the City *Council* or some officer. It includes a nominating, initiative, referendary or recall *petition*.

"*Proponent*" means the *person* who proposes an initiative, referendary or recall *petition* and who has control of the circulation and filing of the *petition* with the City *Clerk*. It includes a *person* who proposes a Charter amendment *petition*.

"*Registrar*" means the Registrar of Voters of the County of San Diego, or a duly appointed deputy.

"*Special Election*" means any *election* other than a *District* or *City-wide Primary Election*, or *District* or *City-wide General Election*. It includes all *elections* to consider ballot *measures* as well as *elections* to fill vacancies in *elective office* and recall *elections*.

"*Voter*" means an elector who is qualified and entitled to vote under general law in San Diego City *elections* and who is validly registered at the time he or she seeks to exercise the right to vote.

"*Voter Pamphlet*" means the *voter* information pamphlet compiled and distributed with the sample ballot for each *election*.  
(Amended 2-11-2002 by O-19034 N.S.)

#### **§27.0104 Computation of Qualified Voters**

Except for *petitions* to amend the Charter, when a stated percentage of *voters* is required, that percentage shall be computed using the number of registered *voters* in the City as of the close of registration for the most recent *District* or *City-wide General Election*, starting with the *City-wide General Election* of November 3, 1998. For *petitions* to amend the Charter, that percentage shall be computed according to the *Registrar's* most recent official report of registration to the Secretary of State.  
(*"Computation of Qualified Voters"* added 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

#### **§27.0105 Counting of Words**

When a stated number of words is required by this article, the word count shall be determined using the City *Clerk's* published word count guidelines.  
(*"Counting of Words"* added 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

#### **§27.0106 Elections to be Conducted under this Article; Effect of State Law**

- (a) All *elections* shall be conducted by the City *Clerk*, except that *elections* for members of the governing board of the San Diego Unified School District shall be conducted by the *Registrar* pursuant to Education Code Section 5303. This includes nomination procedures, and also applies to all special and recall *elections*.
- (b) The procedures for seating members of the governing board of the San Diego Unified School District shall be the same as those for electing or appointing

members of the City *Council* pursuant to this article, unless the governing board, at its option, adopts a resolution to have nominations conducted pursuant to other law.

- (c) The procedures for the recall of members of the governing board of the San Diego Unified School District shall be the same as those for the recall of members of the City *Council* provided by this article, unless the governing board, at its option, adopts a resolution to have recall *elections* conducted pursuant to other law.
- (d) All *elections* shall be conducted under the Charter and this article. The City Clerk and City *Council* may rely on state *elections* law for guidance if there is no controlling provision in this article.

*(Renumbered from Sec. 27.2004, retitled to "Elections to be Conducted under this Article; Effect of State Law" and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)*

#### **§27.0107 Calling of Elections**

- (a) Except as provided in Section 27.0107(b), the City *Council* shall call all *elections* by ordinance and shall specify the purpose and time of each election.
- (b) All *elections* of the San Diego Unified School District shall be called by that district.

*("Calling of Elections" renumbered from Sec. 27.2005 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)*

#### **§27.0108 Effect of Majority Vote at Primary Election**

All *elective officers* of the City shall be nominated at a *District* or *City-wide Primary Election*. In the event one *candidate* receives the majority of votes cast for all *candidates* for nomination to a particular *elective office*, the candidate receiving the majority of votes shall be deemed to be, and declared by the City *Council* to be, elected to such office.

*("Effect of Majority Vote at Primary Election" added 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)*

#### **§27.0109 Precincts**

The voting precincts shall be the precincts established by the *Board of Supervisors* or the *Registrar*.

*("Precincts" renumbered from Sec. 27.2006 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)*

**§27.0110 Precinct Boards**

The precinct boards shall be those established by the *Registrar* pursuant to *election* laws of the State of California.

(“*Precinct Boards*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2007 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0111 Delegation of Duties**

The *City Clerk* may delegate to the *Registrar* those duties assigned to the *City Clerk* by this article which can more properly be performed by the *Registrar*.

(“*Delegation of Duties*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2014 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0112 Delegation of Authority to Deputy**

Any duty under state law or this municipal code required to be performed by the *City Clerk* may be performed by an authorized deputy of the *City Clerk* or by an individual authorized by the *City Clerk*.

(“*Delegation of Authority to Deputy*” added 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0113 Retention of Documents**

All papers and documents relating to *elections* that are maintained by the *City Clerk* may be destroyed in accordance with the *City Clerk’s* Records Disposition Schedule, if designated in that schedule, or two years after the date on which they were filed or received or created, whichever is later. This section does not apply to the destruction of official ballots.

(“*Retention of Documents*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2017 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0114 Invalidity of Petition**

No *petition* is valid for use in connection with any *election* held after the *election* for which the *petition* was circulated.

(“*Invalidity of Petition*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2018 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0115 Publication**

(a) The *City Clerk* shall publish at least once in the official City newspaper:

(1) Ordinances calling *elections*, or digests of the ordinances, which publication shall constitute the Notice of *Election*; and

(2) Resolutions declaring the results of *elections*.

(b) No other publication is required.

(“*Publications*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2019, retitled to “*Publication*” and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0116 Term of Office**

The term of office for officers elected pursuant to this article at a *District* or *City-wide Primary Election*, or at a *District* or *City-wide General Election*, shall be four years. The term of office shall commence at 10:00 a.m. (local time) on the first Monday after the first calendar day in December following the *elective officers’ election* or upon taking their oath of office, whichever occurs later. It shall expire at 10:00 a.m. (local time) on the first Monday after the first calendar day in December of the term’s fourth year.

(“*Term of Office*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2020 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0117 Map of Council Districts**

The City *Clerk* shall maintain a current map of the City showing the boundaries of each City *Council* district as most recently established by ordinances of the City *Council*.

(“*Councilmanic Districts*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2021, retitled to “*Map of Council Districts*” and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0118 Redistricting**

No change in the boundaries of City *Council* districts shall affect the term of office of any City Councilmember who has been elected and whose term has not expired at the time of the change.

(“*Redistricting*” renumbered from Sec. 27.2022 and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)

**§27.0119 Residency Requirements of Candidates and Elective Officers**

The residency requirements for *elective officers* set forth in Section 7 of the Charter of The City of San Diego having been impliedly rendered invalid by *Johnson v. Hamilton*, 15 Cal. 3d 461 (1975), the following shall apply:

- (a) No individual is eligible to run for, or hold the office of Mayor or City Attorney of the City, either by *election* or appointment, unless:
  - (1) that individual is, at the time of assuming such office, a resident and *voter* of the City of San Diego, and,
  - (2) that individual was a registered *voter* of the City at least thirty calendar days prior to the date nomination papers were filed by the *candidate* pursuant to the nomination and write-in procedures in this article or at least thirty calendar days prior to the date of filing an application for appointment to an *elective office* pursuant to Section 27.0804 of this article.
- (b) No individual is eligible to run for or hold the office of a Councilmember, other than the Mayor, either by *election* or appointment, unless:
  - (1) that individual is, at the time of assuming such office, a resident and *voter* of the district from which nomination or appointment is sought, and
  - (2) that individual was a registered *voter* of the district at least thirty calendar days prior to the date nomination papers were filed by the *candidate* pursuant to the nomination and write-in procedures in this article or at least thirty calendar days prior to the date of filing an application for appointment to an *elective office* pursuant to Section 27.0804 of this article.

*(Renumbered from Sec. 27.2023, retitled to "Residency Requirements of Candidates and Elective Officers" and amended 7-26-1999 by O-18664 N.S.)*

## **§27.0120 Provision Due to Holidays**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if a deadline for filing a petition or report required by this article falls on a holiday or a weekend, that deadline will be extended to the following business day.  
*(Added 7-18-2000 by O-18826 N.S.)*